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EDITORIAL NOTES

Previous editorials have been devoted to the consideration of the problem of the control of the secondary school and to an attempt to bring out the historic factors which are operative in the present situation. If what has been said is true, we should be in a position to make constructive suggestions as to the way out of the difficulty. As a necessary preliminary step in the direction of positive recommendation we may lay down several considerations which must guide us in attempting to find a practicable solution of our problem.

At the outset, therefore, we must recognize the fact that the burden of proof rests on those who would bring about the desired transfer of control.

THE WAY OUT We must have something to offer. Mere protest, however well founded, if we may judge by the past, will avail little or nothing. Nor is it enough to feel strongly; we must see clearly and act firmly. Moreover, the present situation is not the deliberate making of any college or group of colleges. No one has gone about it to gain or to keep control of the secondary school for the sake of mere control. From the standpoint of the college, the prescribing of entrance requirements and the setting of entrance examinations have been the means of securing a much-needed division of labor. The college must be able to count on something, to begin somewhere, if it is to accomplish anything worth while. In the absence of any definite programme or offering from the secondary school, it is but natural that the college should prescribe what it could use and therefore would accept. Furthermore, it is but fair to note that until recently the college was, all things considered, better able to determine the curriculum of the secondary school than the unorganized body of poorly trained teachers who devoted themselves temporarily to the work of secondary education. The fault of the college is not that it met past exigencies as they arose but that it now fails to recognize that the day when its control was necessary and therefore tolerable has passed. Our secondary schools are in the hands of executive officers and teachers who, in the main, have had the same kind of scholarly preparation as the teachers in our colleges. And they are dealing directly with the problems of secondary education, as many, if not most, of our college teachers have not had the opportunity to do. In a scientific age like our own, it ought to be sufficient merely to call attention to this fact.

In suggesting, therefore, the steps to be taken to secure immediate relief for the secondary schools by effecting a transfer of control to the officers and teachers of these schools, it will be well to lay down three principles of procedure, to which all interested ought to be able to subscribe.

*PRINCIPLES OF
PROCEDURE*

1. We must make haste slowly. If secondary school men really believe

what they so often assert, that the colleges dominate the situation for them, they must also recognize that this domination is a form of control for which some immediate and adequate substitute must be found. The colleges must not be called upon *just to let go*. The ensuing confusion and waste would be intolerable. The transfer must be made item by item under the strictest supervision and with the co-operation of all concerned.

2. We must adopt an educational point of view. It would probably be urged by defenders of the present system that it represents an educational point of view. Perhaps in a general sense this is true. Happily, however, in the course of the last century, particularly in the field of elementary education, there has been worked out a pretty definite conception of what we mean by educational in a strict sense of the term. This meaning has been suggested in a previous editorial. In fact we need not ask for anything better in the way of a working standpoint than to have the existing philosophy of elementary education with the obviously necessary adaptations taken as the basis for the reconstruction of our secondary school practice. The cardinal points of that philosophy are the insistence that the content of the curriculum shall have meaning for the children, shall contribute to their development, and shall reveal to them the world in which their life is to go on. So for the secondary school we demand that this same philosophy shall become dominant. This, then, is an educational point of view for secondary education, that the criteria for the organization of the curriculum and the determination of method shall be derived from those disciplines and sciences which are revealing to us the marvelous unfolding that takes place in every youth during the four years of the secondary school.

3. We must employ the experimental method. It is pertinent here to insist that there is a narrower and a looser use of this term, both of which are legitimate, the only distinction being one of degree. We need not wait for action until our new movement in experimental education shall have solved all or most of our problems. Experimenting is simply trying to see what can be done, with the best available control of conditions and the best attainable test of results. Its object is that we may not leave the attainment of progress to the play of blind forces and mere chance. We can think out what we believe should be done and then try it to see if it ought to be done. It is just because the secondary school is prevented under present conditions from performing this prime educational function that relief must be had. What the colleges can do to afford this relief will be suggested in the next number of the *Review*.

W. B. O.